

10 Tips for Healthcare Providers Hosting COVID-19 Vaccine Tele-Townhalls

Use the list below to help you, as a healthcare provider, host your Tele-Townhall.

1. **Tailor your messaging for your audience:** You know your patients best!
2. **Keep the presentation short (~10-15 min):** Leave time for questions.
3. **Have a Co-Host:** Keep your Tele-Townhall engaging by having another person available to present the material, answer questions, and monitor the chat.
4. **Focus on facts:** Provide COVID-19 vaccine facts to encourage the vaccine-hesitant population to get vaccinated.
5. **Use the script as a guide:** Talk through the presentation using the script and your own messaging to reach your audience effectively.
6. **Use a theme throughout:** A singular message that drives home the message, such as “the vaccine is safe,” “you should get vaccinated,” or “we are here to answer your questions” will help make the content stick for your audience.
7. **Engage and encourage your audience:** Encourage the audience to get vaccinated if they haven’t already. Keep the mood of the Tele-Townhall positive and aim to address the audience’s vaccine hesitancy.
8. **Be honest in your response in the Q&A sessions:** If you don’t know an answer to a question, that is ok! It is better to let the audience know that you can’t answer at that moment and that you will get back to them in a timely manner rather than make up an answer.
9. **Guidelines may change:** CDC and Virginia guidelines may change based on the current state of the pandemic, be sure to have the most up to date information available from reputable sources.
10. **Address COVID-19 variants:** A big reason for citizens may receive the vaccine is to help fight against COVID-19 variants, be sure to address the variants and provide the facts. In addition, consider to mention you are not “vax shaming” and do not intend to project that if that is what is being perceived.

Disclaimer:

These materials have been developed to support providers in conducting conversations with their patients to support and encourage COVID-19 vaccinations. These materials should not be used for any other purpose.

For questions related to these materials, please email evin.shaw@vdh.virginia.gov

TELE-TOWNHALL SCRIPT

A CONVERSATION WITH DR. (INSERT NAME)

Instructions

In this script, there are two sections – one titled “Key Talking Points” and another titled “Sample Script”.

The “Key Talking Points” section should be referenced during the actual presentation. In “Key Talking Points”, you will find the flow of the deck with bullets listed out for each slide. The bullets should be referred to as key talking points, not the actual script. When presenting, feel free to add your own medical language and verbiage that you feel best for your patients, as you know them best!

In the “Sample Script” section, we have an example of what a full script would look like during a presentation. This can be referenced prior to the presentation so you can begin to develop an idea of what you want to say and how you want to say it.

Also – please review the below links ahead of your webinar:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/myocarditis.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/faq.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19.html>

Thank you again for hosting a tele-townhall on vaccine hesitancy with your patients – we couldn’t be happier to have you on board!

-VDH Team

Key Talking Points

Townhall Introduction [Prior to presentation being visible to patients]

- Introduce yourself and the purpose of hosting the tele-townhall on vaccine hesitancy.
- Outline what will be discussed during the presentation:
 - Where Virginia is today with COVID-19.
 - The facts about the vaccine.
 - Common myths about the vaccine.
 - Frequently asked questions on the vaccine.
 - Open forum for the attendees to ask questions.
- Note that the timeframe of the presentation will be around 10 minutes, with the remaining time allocated for open Q&A.

Presentation Introduction [SLIDE 1 is presented]

- Highlight the purpose behind getting vaccinated is to keep citizens healthy, prevent the spread of COVID-19 and its variants, and lower hospitalizations and deaths that result from COVID-19.

Disclaimer [SLIDE 2 is presented]

- This slide is a disclaimer only and does not need to be presented to Patients – feel free to skip it.

Contents [SLIDE 3 is presented]

- Highlight again what the agenda of the presentation will be.

What is happening in Virginia [SLIDE 4 is presented]

- Referencing the graph, call out that when vaccinations were first distributed to the general public in April 21, COVID-19 cases went down.

- Referencing the graph, note that starting in June/July 21, we have seen an uptick in COVID-19 cases amongst the unvaccinated.
 - Note that hospitalizations and deaths have increased amongst the unvaccinated.
 - Call out the Delta variant for causing this uptick as well.
 - Reiterate the severeness of COVID-19 amongst the unvaccinated and how the vaccine will help prevent the worst-case outcomes.

5 Things You Need to Know [SLIDE 5 is presented]

- State that the COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for everyone 12+ years in age.
- Discuss Point 1 – “You cannot get COVID-19 from the COVID-19 vaccine”.
 - The vaccines the FDA has authorized do not contain live inactivated virus.
- Discuss Point 2 – “Vaccines Were Made Following FDA Standards”
 - All 3 vaccines went through a three phase testing to ensure safety to the public.
- Discuss Point 3 - “COVID-19 Vaccines protect your health”
 - Those vaccinated are less likely to be hospitalized, be put on a ventilator, or die due to the illness.
- Discuss Point 4 - “The Vaccines are zero cost out of pocket”
 - Getting vaccinated is zero cost, even without insurance.
- Discuss Point 5 - “Vaccinated people help stop the spread”
 - Evidence indicates that people who are fully vaccinate with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) are less likely than unvaccinated persons to acquire COVID-19 and variants and transmit it to others.
 - Breakthrough infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community transmission of the virus.

5 Myths about the COVID-19 Vaccine [SLIDE 6 is presented]

- Discuss Myth 1 – “The vaccines will not affect or hurt the fertility or the ability to become a parent for anyone”
 - This is true regardless of gender identity, race or ethnicity.
 - There is currently no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta.
 - Pregnant women can also get vaccinated without any risks to the parent or child.

- Discuss Myth 2 – “The vaccines will not cause sterility or contribute to sterility”

- Discuss Myth 3 - “The vaccines will not affect the DNA or alter the DNA of anyone”

- Discuss Myth 4 – “No one will become more vulnerable to or contract COVID-19”
 - None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines will cause someone to test positive for COVID-19 on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.

- Discuss Myth 5 – “The vaccines do not contain any fetal tissue”
 - Note that the vaccine was made with fetal cells. For more information on this prior to the presentation, visit [this](#) link. **DO NOT MENTION THIS BULLET** unless an attendee makes a specific remark/question to fetal cells and wants to know more.

Frequently Asked Questions [SLIDE 7 is presented]

- Discuss FAQ 1 - “Can I still get COVID-19 if I get vaccinated?”
 - Small percentage of vaccinated people can get the virus.
 - Vaccinated people are less likely to get very ill, hospitalized, or die.

- Discuss FAQ 2 - “Will I experience side effects?”
 - Side effects are normal signs that your body is building immunity.
 - Mention the most common side effects of all the COVID-19 vaccines.
 - These are normal and should go away in a few days.
 - Side effects from the vaccine are way less dangerous than the actual virus.

- Discuss FAQ 3 - “Were the vaccines made too quickly?”
 - Note that the methods used to make these vaccines had been in development for decades before the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The vaccines had to go through all the steps of testing that are required for other vaccines that are used in the U.S.
 - They are as safe as other vaccines.
 - These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

- Discuss FAQ 4 - “What is the Delta Variant?”
 - Define virus variants and what they mean, outline risks of virus variants.

- Discuss FAQ 5 - “What is herd immunity?”
 - Define herd immunity and the positives of achieving herd immunity.

- Discuss FAQ 6 - “Should my kids get the vaccine?”
 - Note that vaccine benefits outweigh all risks in citizens, including children.
 - Note that the vaccine is approved for those 12+ years in age.

- Discuss FAQ 7 - “Where can I get vaccinated?”
 - State the qualifications of those who are eligible to get vaccinated and list the below resources to sign up for a vaccine.
 - Register : vaccinate.virginia.gov OR sign up over the phone 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682)

Your Questions Answered [SLIDE 8 is presented]

- Give a brief, few sentence recap of how vaccines are safe, effective, and are of no cost to patients.
- Introduce the Q&A time and give instructions on how to use the Q&A feature (be sure to call out the Question and Answer Feature on Zoom, and for attendees to mark themselves as anonymous if the wish to do so while submitting questions).

Get Vaccinated [Slide 9 is presented]

- Display this slide once Q&A session is wrapped up and it is time for the tele-townhall to be closed out.

Sample Script

Townhall Introduction [Prior to presentation being visible to patients]

Hello my name is [insert name] and I want to have a candid conversation with you about the COVID-19 vaccine. Thank you for joining me today to discuss this very important, yet at times controversial topic. Being your Doctor is a privilege and it is my job to protect you and your family and give you the best medically sound information that can help keep you and your family safe. There is a lot of information about this virus that has been circulating throughout the last year and half and I want you to know what the facts are on the virus and the vaccine so you can make the most informed and best decisions for you and your family.

I will begin by giving you an update of the virus, the variants and the vaccine and how it's affecting Virginia. I will address five things you need to know, the five biggest myths concerning the vaccine and answering frequently asked questions.

Then it's your turn to ask any questions you may have about the virus, the variants, and the vaccine.

If you are joining online there is a Question and Answer function that you can use to ask your questions, I will try to answer as many questions as I can in the time allotted.

(Time Frame)- This webinar will be approximately 30 minutes long

Presentation Introduction [SLIDE 1 is presented]

My goal as your provider is to keep you healthy, to make sure that together we can prevent serious illness, in order to help you have the best physical life possible. With that said, prevention is key. My goal is to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants in order to lower your family and friends chances of contracting the virus and possibly going to the hospital or even death.

Disclaimer [SLIDE 2 is presented]

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Contents [SLIDE 3 is presented]

This webinar will cover what is currently happening in VA in conjunction with the latest COVID-19 data. The five key points that you need to know about the COVID-19 virus and vaccine. Five myths and the truths about the vaccine according to the most recent scientific research. I will then address the most frequently asked questions about the virus and vaccine and segue to a Q & A in which you are encouraged to ask questions that you may still have about the virus and the vaccine.

What is happening in Virginia [SLIDE 4 is presented]

As you can see on the graph, Covid-19 cases went down significantly when the vaccine was available to the public between April through June of this

year. However, as the vaccine uptake has declined at the end of June into July, the current daily confirmed cases of COVID-19 and hospitalization are slowly rising amongst the unvaccinated population in Virginia. Covid-19 can be a very serious illness but getting the COVID-19 vaccine can help prevent you from becoming infected and spreading the disease. If you do test positive, the vaccine can help prevent you from getting seriously ill, having long term effects from the illness and becoming hospitalized. All COVID-19 vaccines have a 100% efficacy against death due to COVID-19 complications. The COVID-19 vaccine can also help prevent your family members and friends from contracting and spreading the virus.

5 Things You Need to Know [SLIDE 5 is presented]

The benefits of the vaccines far outweigh any potential risks – the CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older, given the greater risk of COVID-19 illness and possibly severe complications.

#1- You cannot get COVID-19 from the COVID-19 vaccine!

The three vaccines the FDA has authorized do not contain live inactivated virus, so there is no risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 by receiving the vaccine.

#2- Vaccines Were Made Following FDA Standards!

All pharmaceuticals, including vaccines, go through a rigorous three phase testing to ensure safety to the public. The COVID-19 vaccines went through the exact same process.

#3- COVID-19 Vaccines protect your health!

Even if you contract COVID-19 after vaccination, you are less likely to be hospitalized, be put on a ventilator, or die due to the illness.

#4- The Vaccines are zero cost out of pocket!

Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 will cost you zero dollars out of pocket, even if you do not have insurance.

#5-Vaccinated people help stop the spread!

A growing body of evidence indicates that people who are fully vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) are less likely than unvaccinated persons to acquire COVID-19 and variants and transmit it to others. Breakthrough infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community transmission of the virus.

5 Myths about the COVID-19 Vaccine [SLIDE 6 is presented]

#1- The vaccines will not affect or hurt the fertility or the ability to become a parent for anyone, regardless of gender identity, race or ethnicity. There is currently no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta.

#2- The vaccines will not cause sterility or contribute to sterility. There is no evidence that male fertility problems are a side effect of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines.

#3- The vaccines will not affect the DNA or alter the DNA of anyone. COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

#4- The vaccines will not give anyone COVID-19, nor will they make anyone more susceptible to getting sick from COVID-19. In addition, none of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines will cause you to test positive for COVID-19 on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.

#5- The vaccines do not contain any fetal tissue

Frequently Asked Questions [SLIDE 7 is presented]

#1- Can I still get COVID-19 if I get vaccinated?

A very small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus. These are called “vaccine breakthrough cases”. This means that while people who have been vaccinated are much less likely to get sick, it will still happen in rare cases. It’s also possible that some fully

vaccinated people might have been infected, but have no symptoms (asymptomatic infections).

#2- Will I experience side effects?

Side effects are normal signs that your body is building immunity. The most common side effects of all the COVID-19 vaccines are soreness or redness around the injection site, fever, chills, feeling tired, joint or muscle pain, body aches and headaches. These are normal and should go away in a few days. Side effects from the vaccine are way less dangerous than the actual virus.

#3- Were the vaccines made too quickly?

The methods used to make these vaccines had been in development for decades before the COVID-19 pandemic started and the vaccines had to go through all the steps of testing that are required for other vaccines that are used in the U.S. They are as safe as other vaccines. These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

#4- What is the Delta Variant?

When viruses infect you, they attach to your cells, get inside them, and make copies of their RNA, which helps them spread. If there's a copying mistake, the RNA gets changed, which causes variants to the original strain. Scientists call those changes mutations, however there is promising evidence to suggest that the current vaccines will protect you from most variants, or mutations.

#5- What is herd immunity?

Herd immunity means that the majority of a population is immune.

When this is achieved, the infectious disease is less likely to spread

Reaching herd immunity will help end the pandemic, open more opportunities, and protect the most vulnerable members of our community

#6- Should my kids get the vaccine?

Yes. Experts believe that the benefits of being vaccinated for COVID-19 outweigh the risks. Although COVID-19 in children is usually milder than in adults, some kids can get very sick and have complications or long-lasting symptoms that affect

their health and well-being.

#7- Where can I get vaccinated?

Everyone 12 years of age and older is now eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

Register : vaccinate.virginia.gov OR sign up over the phone

877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682)

Your Questions Answered [SLIDE 8 is presented]

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective
- You may have side effects after vaccination, but these are normal
- Vaccines are widely available for those **12 years of age and older**
- Being fully vaccinated can help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 vaccine and variants
- Let's get back to doing the things we love, with those we love!

I would now like to open up the webinar to your questions. Please feel free to use your Question function to submit questions. Thank you for joining us today and let's together make Virginia the safest and healthiest possible!

Get Vaccinated [Slide 9 is presented]

If there are no further questions, I would like to thank you all for joining me in today's townhall. Please feel free to reach out if you have any additional questions!